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HOUSE OF LORDS
Issue #2
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is HOUSE OF LORDS, a zeen by, for and about publishing, publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to publishers and GMs only. It is composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and a great many letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Most importantly, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

This zeen also exists as a vehicle for Mark Luedi's subzeen (freshly renamed) on the subject of a new Publisher's Handbook. Any comments on the subject should be addressed to Mark.

You can get this zeen any number of ways. 1) Send me a number of stamps, or set up a small account of real money and I'll send it to you for the price of postage.

2) Set up a trade, all for all.

3) Already be a trader/subber to my main zeen, RETALIATION.

...and now, somehow forgotten before...4) Write for it! Anything that gets printed here will earn the writer from one to three issues of HOL. Most will earn two. How any pubber could forget this ultimate incentive is beyond me. But I did. Very shortly, method #3 will be extinct. Issue #3 will be the last that goes to all of my old subbers, after that - no more. Unless, of course, you show some interest and use one of the other three methods....

The 1983 Dipdom Census will be run by Dick Martin (me) during the month of September. Any and all pubbers are requested to either send me their mailing lists or print address lists in your zeens and send me a copy. Response has been good so far considering the short notice, but I need much more. We'll compile the census over the month of October, and Fred Davis has promised to do a statistical analysis of it like you wouldn't believe. I know I didn't believe last year's job...really good. Copies will go free to contributors, and cheap to everybody else. Help make this an invaluable tool by sending in your list today!

If any of you happen to want to make an announcement that you wish sent to all pubbers (poll announcements, results, new zeens, or anything else) this zeen is a willing vehicle. It'll cost you though - the cost of sending that issue out (about \$15 sent issue #1 to everybody I could think of - paid for by the census). I have no idea there will be much demand for this, but if there is - why not? Please keep it short, a page or two at most. This is the last issue that will go out to all pubbers I can think of without firm (economic) coaxing. Of course, if you have an announcement that you just want sent out to the normal readership, there is no charge at all - and I'll be keeping up with Dipdom news as best I can. Maybe, if space permits.

And now, on to the matter at hand....

NEW BUSINESS

HOUSE OF LORDS

(Larry Peery/XENOLOGIC) I like the idea. I didn't know about the earlier effort. I also like the idea of a Publishers' Handbook.

(Jim Meinél/THE PRINCE) I really like the name of the publishers' zeen, HOUSE OF LORDS. I finally made it.

I think the idea is fantastic! I am very interested in reading what other publishers have to say and writing a bit about topics myself. And keep it only for pubbers! If someone hasn't gone through the agony of putting out a few issues then they shouldn't have any input. Keep it just for us or else you'll wind up with just another letter column. Let them make up their own zeen, HOUSE OF COMMONS (ha ha).

(Dave Carter/SLEEPLESS KNIGHTS) Enclosed is 2 of my dwindling stock of US Money for a sub to HOUSE OF LORDS. Just keep Larry Peery's hands off of it and it should be an interesting concept. I believe that Bill LaFosse was the last person to try such an idea.

Keep the project going.

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more on...HOUSE OF LORDS: THE CONCEPT

(Mark Luedi/30 MILES OF BAD ROAD) HOL will be a very good source (hopefully) for Publisher's Handbook material. In fact, that would be a good topic for discussion sometime.

(Mike Conner/LONE STAR DIPLOMAT) Your project has a lot of promise. I may have a word or two to contribute.

(Mark Keller/HAI! JIKAI!) I think HOUSE OF LORDS is a good idea.

(Steve Langley/MAGUS) I'm sending you three stamps (my total horde at the moment less the one I'm mailing this with) for HOUSE OF LORDS.

I have no idea if the project is useful or not - but I'll try to help if I can.

(Russell Sipe/THE ARMCHAIR DIPLOMAT) Thank you for the copy of HOL. I, for one, am certainly interested in it.

(Rod Walker/DIPLOMACY WORLD) Thanks very much for HOL #1. A very good job. This is something the hobby may not exactly need desperately, but I would certainly enjoy seeing it succeed because it could be very useful. I would even say the hobby does in fact need some such thing, but somebody would ask me to prove it and I can't -- it just seems a very good idea.

My hope for HOL is that you can keep it a calm, rational zeen for the calm, rational discussion of mutual problems. The sort of vitriol which has appeared all over the hobby (and which we have all participated in from time to time) would be inappropriate here.

(Mark Berch/DIPLOMACY DIGEST) This seems to be a very fine idea; sign me up. Some comments:

A) Forbidding or even discouraging non-GM/pubbers from subbing is probably a poor idea. There are people who have done neither, but who are interested in one or both of those topics. And they may have some interesting ideas or arguments that just might not occur to one of us. Moreover, it will appear elitist to some to make such a barrier. The notion that "only publishers are interested in" something like polls, to name your first topic, is silly on its face.

B) Being "non-partisan" is harder than it sounds, mostly because people have different notions of what that requires. This will force you to decide on an editing policy: will you edit letters? I suspect your preference is not to, but that could come in conflict with your desire to keep it non-partisan, forcing you to choose between these goals.

C) To save you time, you should encourage people to prepare their comments in a form which does not require retyping.

((Thanks, guys, for the words of encouragement. Now, if only you keep this up for a few more months, this thing will be off the ground on a long term basis.

((I feel that this zeen will be most effective if it stays "elitist." Jim sums it all up - if you can't talk from experience, what can you say here? While it is possible that this may lead to tunnel vision, I would much prefer to look at it as a "focus" instead. That, and only a pubber can really know the "realities" of pubbing - the time, money, effort and heart that goes into each zeen. Rules can be bent though, and I'm sure there will be exceptions.

((Mark Berch feels that non-pubbers are interested in polls. True enough, but not in the sense I had in mind. Actors and audiences are both interested in theater reviews, but for the actors its far more acute. Thus I feel it is with pubbing. You are constantly being evaluated as a pubber (like it or not), and it almost has to affect you in some way that it wouldn't for a non-pubber. Does anybody else have any comment on this?

((Yes, I would prefer to stay "non-partisan" in this zeen. I would also prefer not to do extensive editing, but we can't win them all. The way the zeen is set up, I almost have to edit it/cut and paste by topic. Actually, the need to retype all of

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this makes it easier to edit out partisan stuff (by that I mean nasty partisan stuff). Saving time is also hopeless. It will help immensely if submissions are in an orderly paragraph form, and that's about all I'll ask for.

((But the zeen will not be totally dry, either. Sure, I could have cut Dave's remark about Larry, but I felt no great need to. Larry is famous for being a bit... ah...long winded at times, and he knows it. We're big boys here though, and I hope we can leave all our violent disagreements elsewhere for the time being. We're all in the same boat, so don't try and sink each other - you'll only hurt yourself in the end.))

CENSUS

(Mark Berch) Good luck. I think, though, that "August and September" is a poor choice. The problem is, August will tend to pick up summer addresses, September will get their fall or school addresses. I doubt that you will want to print both. You are going to have enough problem as it is with multiple addresses for people. I'd suggest a narrower window - just one month but I guess it's too late for this year.

((Yes, it's too late now. You are half right - I chose poor dates, it should've been September and October with the list coming out in early December. But one month is too short, we tried that last year. Addresses were still coming in well after the end of the time period, good for a 10% increase in the list! That's way too much in my book.))

(Eric Kane/ANDUIN) First of all, to the census. ANDUIN'S mailing list was just published in issue #21. If you don't have your copy any more, I'll send you another. I have a few more subbers since then but I'm sure these guys are mainstream hobbyists so you'll get them from other pubbers hopefully. Good luck with the census this year, if you need any help, don't hesitate to ask (I know, what good can a 17 year old possibly be, right?). I have an address book program but it is made for the Apple. I might be able to get a listing of it for you though if you'd like. If you're interested, I'll try.

((Thanks, Eric, but I don't think the two machines are compatible. It seems foolish that they aren't, but I guess each wants to keep his own captive market. And what is this about being a 17 year old? Age really has little to do with getting things done in Dipdom. After all, I'm getting a senile old bat like Fred Davis to help me, why not a whippersnapper in diapers as well? If you can think of anything interesting to do with the census besides the stuff Fred will do (and our basic inputting) let me know. I already have the software and hardware I need to get by on, and Julie will help me type them in (I hope!). Thanks for the offer!))

(Rod Walker) Census: Well, as you know, Eric Kane was expressing a lot of interest in this. I've told Eric that this is something he'd have to work out directly with you, since you had earlier expressed an intent to do the '83 census. I had not long ago responded to an inquiry from him to the effect that, apparently, you were not going to do the census and perhaps he might want to go ahead on his own. I see I was wrong there. Well, good luck with it, and I'm glad that there's a definite decision on the matter. However: You may want to see about getting Eric to do some of the work involved. He does have a home computer, and should be able to take the data you accumulate and whip it into all sorts of shapes. Well, it's a thought; whatever. I'm just glad that a census will be done.

((Most of this is answered already above. Yes, there was some early confusion about whether I'd do the census, as I was uncertain whether I'd have access (and I mean easy access) to a computer capable of doing the job. That was cleared up in early July, and I straightened this all out with Eric at Origins in Detroit. Now we'll have to see what shapes I can thrash the data into (it'll be easier on Fred this year than last, that's for sure.))

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more on...CENSUS

(Ronald Brown/SNAFU) I want to mention that Canada will be conducting its own census this year, as we need to determine who the CDO members are in preparation for ratifying a new constitution. There are only five zeens, so I've asked the pubbers to send me addresses by the end of September. I imagine they'll be faster than that. Anyhow, haven't decided on how I'm going to present the results. I may just give statistical results and sue it to check the validity of ballots. I may publish it, if I have time. Though the problem with the latter is that so many Dippies move every month, it's out of date before you can publish it.

Anyhow, if I do publish the names and addresses, I'll send you a copy. I suppose I could send a photocopy of a rather messy sheet of names with insertions, etc. if I don't publish the list. As the last CDO census was done in 1979, it's about time, eh? But the prospect of a new constitution has made it imperative that I get some sort of a list.

((Tell you what - why don't you just send me the raw address lists as soon as you finish with them (I already have the one for SK)? If you do end up publishing a final list of Canadian Dips (and I think you should), how about sending me a copy of that, too? I will be able to sort out the Canadians on my listings this year, as well. You may find that handy. I think you will be surprised with how valuable a master address list will be. Sure, many people move, but many don't. You can always hand write any changes.))

POLLS

(Rod Walker) Good topic. First of all, let me say that your statements on the background are very well put. Congratulations! You have really looked at a lot of points in a very brief space. Nicely done. Especially good was your summary of the 1982 flap over the Leeder Poll. It was very even-handed and fair, and again a nice job of discussing the issue.

Where you have expressed feelings and opinions on the subject, I must say I'm in general agreement with you. The polls are so numerous as to be confusing. The results are questionable. The voting is often peculiar, quirky, and unreliable. And yet polls remain popular.

You don't get DW, so you may not know; however, in the most recent issue, I'm conducting a poll of our readers. A lot of it regards DW, in an attempt to see if some adjustments in our editorial directions. ((??)) (The answer is, maybe.) Part of it, however, is a set of the more standard poll questions...rating GMs, zeens, and players. At the risk of being redundant, I wanted to see how my readers react to other people and publications in the hobby, and also I wanted to be on the receiving end of a poll, to get a better, first-hand idea of the problems.

What I'm getting is interesting. Some very peculiar things...e.g., one of the categories I want zeens rated on is "fun." One respondent has told me that "fun" is not relevant. Mmmmm-mmm!, sports fans! There has been a touch of grudge or "feud" voting. That is, there has been some low-rating of zeens and GMs on the basis of a hate factor rather than any objective perception of the zeen itself or the GM. It would be like me rating John Boardman very low as a GM because I have a low opinion of him in other ways. Objectively, however, I have to rate him very high as a GM. Unfortunately, I've received some obviously grudge-type voting. This sort of thing is impossible to correct for effectively, and will skew the results. This must happen in every poll. But since it's an occupational hazard of any poll, I don't see the problem as one which should recommend us to have no polls at all.

The big problem is so many polls, as you so rightly point out. If we had just one hobby-wide poll, we would be better off. But that would mean getting all the present poll-runners to give up, getting everyone to agree on what would be on (and off) the poll, and so on. Difficult. Probably impossible.

On the other hand, I personally like polls and consider them interesting. One can

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place some stock in the results, but it's difficult to take them with complete seriousness because of the many imponderables affecting the accuracy of the results. But isn't it fascinating how things turn out in various polls? The one for DW readers will also be interesting. In it I asked readers to rate GMs and zeens not just overall, but on some very specific points or subjects. The Peeripoll did something like that, but I'm trying some slightly different emphases. In a way, then, we can justify having many polls as being many windows or viewpoints on the same subject. One poll would give us a single, static result. Other polls can give us contrasting results. And perhaps by comparing all the polls, we can get some accurate pictures of what the hobby is like, irrespective of grudge votes and other anomalies.

((But is there really such a thing as a "grudge vote?" I'm not so sure there is, at least not in the sense you mean. About the only thing I could really call a "grudge vote" is one cast by someone unfamiliar with the subject being voted upon. For instance, if person X has his family send in a bunch of "0" votes for a zeen he hates. Person X is free to send in any vote he wishes, and it must be valid, of course. There is no way you can vote "objectively" in any poll. That is not the point. A poll is an objective reporting of subjective votes. If it were otherwise, you may as well have a rater sit back and rate all the zeens "objectively," and you'd have "perfect" poll results.

((The other side of the coin is "love votes" (not related to "love boats"). By that, I mean giving an extra point or two to people you really like. How do you correct for them? You can't, that I can tell.))

(Eric Kane) I like polls very much and think of them as more than ego-boosters. I think they can be very helpful and informative. Sure, it's nice to get a pat on the back and part of the reason I am pubbing is for the recognition (though that isn't nearly the entire reason, nor is it the most important reason. In fact, it ranks pretty low...). Last year I was 40th in the Leeder poll and it bothered me. This year I was 22nd and was much happier. Next year I hope to be in the top 15. I looked at some of my back issues recently and it's true, I have improved a great deal. That's not to say that I'm perfect now but I think I have gotten better and it shows. I don't know if my rankings had anything to do with my improving (i.e., maybe I worked harder because of my poor showing the first time), but it might have. Probably the single most important reason for my improving is experience. I've learned a great deal during the last year. To answer your questions:

Yes, I pay attention to the polls. I'd like to limit the number of polls, but though I watch them all, I regard the Leeder/Runestone poll as most important. Yes, it bothers me when I finish poorly and I like it when I finish well. Finishing well is more important to me at this stage than not finishing poorly. Whether I do well or not, will not effect the future of ANDUIN any more than "I shall try and improve" or "thanks for your support." I intend to try hard to get as many people as possible to vote next year, and am even considering including post cards with each issue! As far as I can tell, only approximately 10% of the hobby is voting and that simply isn't enough to make the results really meaningful. Of the 1000 or so people in the hobby, I'd say about 200 of them are "hard core" and of that 200, only half of them or so are voting.

((I disagree with your number of "hard core" dippers. If you total about 65 pubbers and half again that many subbers who actually write articles (probably a high estimate) you come up with less than 100 as a voting nucleus. Most of the rest could probably care less about votes and polls, etc. Perhaps these polls are more meaningful than we have been giving them credit for?))

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(Dave Carter) John Leeder may have been within his rights to sell the results of the poll to DIP WORLD but by the same token I would have been within my rights to ask John for money to "advertise" his poll. If we are going to keep this as a labour-intensive money-short hoppy poll that's fine. I'll support it with all I can do to make it a successful poll. On the other hand if John wants to make a small profit (albeit well-deserved) out of it while making me wait for the results then I'll just not bother to advertise it. The delay may not have been too bad for some pubbers but I think DIP WORLD is vastly overrated and I do not get it, which means I have to wait for another GM to get his DIP WORLD and then issue his zeen.

I enjoy getting the poll results (all polls) since it is one way for hobby players/GMs/and pubbers to show their satisfaction with a GM/zeen/player or their displeasure. I would feel bad if I was to do poorly because I believe that I know what my readers want and I believe I give it to them. I would not want to change what I do because then I would not be comfortable with my zeen. Some positive feedback in the way of good zeen poll results shows me that I'm doing something right and encourages me not to stop doing it.

My main beef with the Runestone Poll is that there are too many grudge results. I see that Gary Coughlan got 10's 9's and 8's and 1 x 0. It's pretty obvious that the 0 is a grudge vote when taken with the other scores in mind. Even if that player had a beef with Gary as a GM, Gary's prompt adjudication, legible print, early mailing for the players, relatively error free GMing should have counted for something other than 0. I've played under several GMs who I felt like rating as a 0 but I've given them a 3 or a 4 because they were not "totally" fucked up.

((A much better and more direct method of voicing one's pleasure or displeasure is by writing directly to the target. What would happen if you were to do poorly in a poll? You'd feel uncomfortable changing, but unhappy continuing as is because you're not pleasing your subbers like you were. What then? Just as importantly, you wouldn't even necessarily know what to change, if you decided to go that route.

((As for the grudgevote matter, many people would say that a 3 or 4 was a grudge vote, as well, maybe even a 5 or 6 or 7. Where do you draw the line? I was unaware that the vote breakdown for the Runestone Poll was available. Just looking at it, Dave, how many grudge votes do you count? And how many zeens/GMs would you consider over-rated?))

(Larry Peery) They each serve a different purpose and a different need. I have no quarrel with all the polls, I only wish we had a single hobby pollster to coordinate their distribution and mailing so that we could all be sure of getting all of them. I've spent more time in the past 3 months trying to compile an accurate list of hobby pubbers than anything else. Neither DW, or EE or the ZR, or whatever is complete. It is stupid that we don't have such a list.

I would like to see someone volunteer to handle the printing, distribution, etc. of all polls. Collection, analysis, etc. would be left to the individual. In other words, during a given period (say January-March) all/any one interested in any polling would send their questions/forms/etc. to a single central source. He would compile a single composite form and send it out to all the hobby's pubbers along with the individual's instructions (reprint for pubbers only, for players, etc.). That would eliminate overlapping, missed pubbers, etc.

((If I understand what you're trying to get at here, this zeen is a willing vehicle. If several polls wished to pool their resources and send out announcements simultaneously, I can do it for a reasonable cost. The "poll of the month" syndrome is perhaps more annoying than actually having so many polls. Anyone else have any comments on that?))

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(Ronald Brown) Back to HOL, in response to your comments on the Runestone Poll. First off, I am heartily sick of polls. Seems a month doesn't go by without either a new one being announced, or zeens arriving with ballots fluttering out of them. Do the pollsters ever stop to think about how much time it takes to fill out some of their forms? So, I resent a lot of them because of the amount of my limited hobby time they demand - and, also, I don't understand what the purpose of some of them are or why we need so many, often duplicating other polls.

So, in answer to your first question, generally speaking I give most polls as little thought as possible. An exception is the Runestone Poll. I take that one seriously because it is dependable and well-established, and it does serve a purpose in the hobby.

Considering the fact that there has been a determined effort by a small group of assholes to destroy this poll and its credibility, it has survived. (I am referring, of course, to the cabals getting together to cast "0" votes for decent zeens; voting for non-existent zeens; pubbers and GMs giving themselves "10" votes; rating each issue of a zeen as a separate zeen, disguising the name - in short, the actions of very immature, childish jerks. Fortunately for them they have some protection by the fact that Randolph and John are discrete about such things.)

Anyhow, your second question, yes it "gets" to me if I finish well or poorly. In my first year I think I placed #34 in the Runestone Poll. That bothered me, but instead of whining, I set about to improve my zeen. You see the results of my efforts this year. Placing third tells me that my readers think I have improved and they like the way I've changed over the past few years. That is good to know - and is very satisfying. If a poll result can goad someone into putting a little more effort into his zeen, then it has served its purpose well.

Finishing well or not finishing poorly? I can't see the difference, unless you mean not being mentioned at all. Well, seeing as I'm not interested in most polls, it doesn't bother me at all if I don't finish poorly. (???I'm getting mixed up by double negatives here.)

Putting out the best zeen I can? Yes, that is satisfying. I take pride in getting it in the mail within a few days of the deadline and of producing the most readable product I can. Yes, that's probably reward enough - knowing that a lot of people have come to regard me as reliable. It shows when I get letters from newcomers saying so-and-so recommended my zeen.

Some subbers are voting, some aren't. I think about 30 voted in the last Runestone, so that's about 1/3 of my subbers. I don't expect much more than that to take part, as the majority of Dippies don't give a damn about these polls.

I finished where I did because that reflects what my readers think of SNAFU! Their opinions have obviously improved, but then so has SNAFU! It takes time to establish a zeen, especially if you want to base your reputation on reliability. Also, my first year I was searching for the format of the zeen, and trying to find a decent reproduction method. Some terrible issues then as I mimicked other zeens before I established my own identity. But that's typical of new zines. They pattern themselves on what they know, until they establish enough self-confidence and creativity to assert their identities. Looking over the list of the top half dozen or so finishers in this year's poll, every zeen is unique in its style and quite different from each other. I don't think anyone could duplicate EUROPA EXPRESS or DIPLOMACY BY MOONLIGHT, as they are extensions of their creator's personalities - something the zeens at the bottom of the list lack.

You didn't ask how I expect to do in the future. Honestly, I think SNAFU! is going to slip back to between 10 and 20 - which is where you tend to find older established zeens like BUSHWACKER or DIPLOMACY DIGEST. It doesn't matter. I'll never be no. 1 as long as Gary Coughlan is publishing, but that's okay by me.

((Whew, where to start with this? How about on the next page?

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((The Runestone Poll is "dependable and well-established"? What criteria do you use? Before Randolph Smyth took it over it was most dependable for its lateness. And what "purpose" does it serve? More than any other poll, say the Marco Poll for instance? Please explain! And this Dipdom-wide conspiracy to destroy the Runestone Poll is news to me. Can you back up your theory of a "cabal" setting out to ruin the Leeder/Runestone Poll?

((By "finishing well" as opposed to "not finishing poorly" I meant to get across the notion of whether it was enough to keep your present rating, or you wanted to improve. No, that's not really it, either. Take your case, for instance. This year, SNAFU! finished #3, much better than last year. Now, do you want to try and finish #3 or better next year because anything else would mean you were slipping? Or do you just want to put out the best zeen in Dipdom? I'm confusing the matter here.

((Zeens at the bottom of the Runestone Poll lack personality!? I beg to disagree! If zeens like LIFE OF MONTY, IRKSOME, and GIVE ME A WEAPON! lack anything, it's most certainly not personality! On the other hand, 4 of the topl0 zeens were what I would call "warehouse" zeens (SK, PRINCE, DOGS OF WAR & ENVOY). It seems to me that the secret of a high rating is to be inoffensive and easily understood.))

(John Caruso/WHITESTONIA) I'm sorry to say - yes, I do pay attention to the results of the polls. It's a shame more people don't vote in them. My feelings on the lack of participation is that there are so many polls - Runestone Poll, Player Poll, Marco Poll, Toady Poll, Freshman Poll, etc., that some people just get tired of voting. I'd say that there is a hard core handful that vote in every poll. However, the more people that vote, the more accurate the poll results. I'm surprised you didn't address or even touch on how to get more people to vote. One way might be to have one person run all the polls as Larry Peery suggested. Personally I feel each poll will lose its individuality. I have my own ideas on the subject - attempt to get every zeen to run its own polling, then send each separate poll result to its pollster (Marco to Mark Larzelere, Players to John Caruso, etc.). Each pubber would make a list of names of those who voted in his zeen and pass a copy of these names on to the pollster. If someone votes more than once, the pollster is to delete the extra votes. I figure every zeen should be able to get at least 3/5 of its own people to answer its own polls. Keeping that in mind, the results of each poll could be between 120-200 respondents, a much fairer representation. But then again, my idea is only practical for the smaller polls. Runestone Poll would be impossible to do this with.

Yes, I like to see myself do well. I expect myself and my zeen to finish in a certain area. Over the years, I have finished in the middle as a GM, which is where I should be. My zeen is another story. This year was the only year my zeen finished as it should have, and I wasn't upset. All the other years, it hurt me real bad. I'm proud - I like to be admired by my peers. All I can say is this year, I finished about the same as the last 2 years, with less content in my zeen and less effort. Just goes to show, it's not what you print, it's who you are friends or enemies with. That's why I think 200 respondents to any poll, offsets the friend/enemy votes and would be more representative.

No - I don't have to be #1. Just finishing where I feel I should, is all I ask for, and people to vote me honestly and fairly.

I can't honestly say if all the people who voted for me get my zeen. I must assume most of them received it one time or another in the last year or two. But for certain, enough of my subbers did not vote. Of over 100 different subbers in the last 2 years, I only received 28 votes, little more than 25%. 50% of a zeen's subbers would be representative.

I can't honestly say why I finished where I did, except that Larry Peey pointed out to me in his poll that had it not been for my poor showing in reproduction I would have evaluated much higher in his survey.

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((It sounds to me like your pollster idea would be an immense confusion. So much that it would never be tried, anyway. You would be very hard pressed to get all the pubbers to go along with it, for one thing. Some don't even plugpolls right now, why would they go to the extra effort of actually running one? And the bit about deleting multiple votes just sounds like a nightmare. I have enough trouble deleting multiple addresses from the census! A good alternative to that may be to have each pubber put preprinted ballots into each zeen come election time. That may have helped THE PRINCE this year, I'm sure it helped account for his high turnout. That is an expense each pubber would have to weigh, though. I'm certain it would be far from unanimous as well.

((The more I think about it, the less certain I am that a larger sample is necessarily "better" for these polls. I'd rather have that hard core of "educated" voters who get more than 2 or 3 zeens deciding which ones are the best, if it has to be done. If the only zeen you get is LE FRONT, what do you give it? A 10? A 0? How can you rate it? You have to have a reasonable number of zeens to make the necessary comparisons. I bet that a pretty high percentage of the people that get more than ten zeens vote in the Runestone Poll.))

(Jim Meinel) Being a first year publisher I've only had a limited amount of direct experience with polls. I can't make any general observations on my feelings about them yet, but I can describe how I felt in the only 2 I've been rated in.

In the Freshman Zeen Poll my zeen was 7th out of 9. My first reaction was, why? I beat out the MODERN PATRIOT, hardly a stellar act. Was I really that mediocre? I made a few jokes about it, but I did feel several inches shorter for a while. I know it was because THE PRINCE at that time was nothing more than a flyer with a couple games on flashy colored paper. But the result did give me a little extra incentive to do better. But I drive myself hard anyway to keep up with deadlines and show a clean product.

The Leeder Poll result was way over on the other end - I felt guilty that my subbers had ranked my zeen higher than the subbers of other, better zeens had ranked theirs. I didn't think the ranking was deserved as I haven't even published a year. And people have published more pages in a single issue than I've published in 15. Is there an explanation for this?

My view is that when you ask someone to "rank" a zeen, it is nearly impossible for everyone to interpret the term "rank" the same. Some will judge gamesmastering, others will judge entertainment value, while others (including myself) will just rank the zeens according to my favorites (which zeen do I look for the most in my mailbox?). So when people lament that a poll is "arbitrary" or "useless" I think what they are trying to say is "we're not all in agreement as to how to judge these zeens."

The answer (well, not the answer, more of a suggestion) is to break down a zeen by category. Larry Peery did this with a limited number of zeens and respondents and the results, I felt, were very accurate in their portrayal of a zeen's qualities. With categories such as "repro," "scheduling," "GMing," and "hobby news," there is less ability for people to stick in grudge votes. Well, obviously they still can, but they will have to be more blatant and self deceiving to give, say, LONE STAR DIPLOMAT a "1" for repro.

So there is a proliferation of polls in the hobby, so what? They are fun and the "minor" ones don't hurt anyone. My personal opinion is that the Leeder Poll is the only one worth trying to institutionalize and standardize so as to make it as useful and meaningful as possible. By useful I mean as a vehicle for communicating to the hobby at large what that zeen's strong and weak points are as seen by its subbers.

((Ah, but that's not what the Leeder/Runestone Poll does! It merely notes the merits and demerits, and relative size thereof of each zeen, and gives you a one-number sum total. Not necessarily bad, but of questionable real usefulness. You may as well enjoy being overrated. It may never happen again!))

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still more on...POLLS

(Kathy Byrne/KATHY'S KORNER) How do I feel about the polls - good question. I have finally learned to accept the fact that "hate" votes are in - in some circles! Honestly, my poor showing in the zeen poll used to bother me - but two things changed my mind. First, I demand reader participation, and I get that - if I didn't I'd give up. Two - a poll like the Marco Poll, where hate votes can't affect you - I tend to do okay! I think the most important thing, I've learned, is that if my readers are satisfied - that is enough for me. As long as my readers keep writing me, that is all that matters. If they're satisfied, so am I!

((I'm not so sure that KK is really a victim of "hate" votes or not. I can see where it's often hard to understand what you're saying because it is an "in~~o~~ joke". If you can't understand something, you are bound to rate it lower. So it's just one of those zeens that you love it or you hate it, no in between. Your insistence on reader participation may turn some people off, as well. But you have to make a choice between running the zeen you want, and scoring high in the polls sometimes.

((Do you think KK is the victim of one of RonaldBrown's "cabals?"))

(Steve Langley) Polls. How do I feel about them? I wish they could be more accurate. Which is to say, I wish the people answering the polls would take them seriously. I don't expect that to happen. Since MAGUS has scored fairly well in all the polls I've seen with MAGUS included (Konrad didn't send me the results of his personal poll) I can't say how I feel about scoring low. I like scoring high. I was the one who finally talked Peery into recalculating his results. The corrected results placed EE above MAGUS, as was only just. I don't get a lot of reader feedback (more from Mark Berch than all others put together) other than the polls. I am never as happy with MAGUS as I would like to be.

I send entries to all the polls - whether they are nonsense or serious. When serious, I try to be as objective as possible. I set up a checklist for the zeens I voted in the Runestone Poll. This included; appearance, promptness, articles & letters, games, personality. The last is totally subjective, but hardly outweighs the other four.

Then I set down and scored the zeens. I ended up with three tens. DBM, JAF, & EE. I tend to score high rather than low - I think my lowest score was a 6. That's because there are no zeens that I get that are so bad that they are a total waste.

((Why do you think you get so little reader feedback? Would you like more, and what form would you like it to take? Other than that, my reply to you is much the same as my reply to Rod Walker - why be objective? That's the job of the final summation. Your job with these polls is merely to give a subjective rating to every zeen you feel qualified to rate. Or isn't it? That's the way I did it, anyway.))

(Mark Berch) I view polls as a way for the hobby to collectively express its opinion. Ordinarily, opinion-expressing is done on an individual basis, usually a pubber's opinion, since they write the most anyhow. That's fine, but there's room for collective opinion-making as well. It's a way of cheering and booing, and in my book, that's a completely legitimate way of participating in the hobby, albeit a limited way. The Runestone Poll has had its ups and downs. This year, I think it was hurt by last summer's controversies, and the change of administration, something which should be washed out by next year, so I expect the number of voters to rise, assuming that the hobby stays the same size. What may help turnout, and make the results more interesting, is a more sophisticated presentation of results, such as they have in England, and which may become possible when Randolph gets his computer going. As for the which-one/are-there-too-many question, I don't really see a problem. Those that are perceived as useful or interesting, pubbers will plug, and readers will vote in. This will be all the encouragement the pollster needs to continue. The ones with poor turnouts may survive if the pollster enjoys it or thinks it valuable (in much the same way that zeens with very low circulation can do just fine), but if not, the pollster will find other uses

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and still more on...POLLS

for his time. I do pay attention to the polls, as I'm always curious to see whether the zeens which I like the best are the same ones that the hobby likes in terms of voting. There are messages and stories in the poll results if you can find them. For example, one of the zeens with the highest circulation, GRAUSTARK, didn't make the main list because it didn't garner 10 votes. This reflects not only the fact that Boardman doesn't plug the poll, but the fact that there are a lot of people that get GRAUSTARK, but few if any other zeens. As for myself, sure, I'd like to finish higher than I did, but then again, I'd like my okra plants to have been more productive, and I'd like to win the Irish Sweepstakes too. You can't have everything. I'm not particularly bothered by the results, since 1) I do get enough positive feedback from my subbers, 2) the zeen attracts enough subbers to give me the kind of circulation I need for offset printing, and the kind of circulation that tells me that the zeen is interesting to a lot of people, and 3) I recognize that there are better zeens than mine, zeens which deserve higher ratings. So I don't get bent out of shape by finishing in the middle. If DD took a very sharp drop, I would, however, consider some changes to shake things up.

((Like what, for instance? To the best of my knowledge, DD has been essentially the same for the last five years, with essentially the same finish in the polls as well. A "sharp drop" would seem a little far fetched, wouldn't it? It seems like you feel powerless to up DD's score, or else you are not really interested in doing so. With that kind of attitude, why do you take the results (somewhat) seriously for other zeens? I must have lousy taste in zeens - all the ones I rated highly (most of 'em, anyway) ended up at the bottom. I guess you can't win 'em all.

((How did the little okras come out, anyway?))

((Robert Sacks/KNOWN GAME OPENINGS) Polls - opposed, sir, opposed. As some oldtimers may remember, I oppose popularity polls, to the point of running the Gemignani Awards back in the 70s. (The GAs were for the worst and last.) We should ignore the polls, totally.

((Well, that's one way of looking at it.))

((Konrad Baumeister/GIVE ME A WEAPON!) The Runestone Poll? Who cares? Given how poor the turnout traditionally is, I am surprised it is taken at all seriously, but obviously it is. On the basis of this summer's poll, Linsey proclaimed Coughlan's EE as the greatest zeen "on earth," e.g. Now, that strikes me as excessive...and, in fact, somewhat inconsistent, coming from someone who is rather strongly anti-rating anyway, but that's beside the point. The only people taking the poll very seriously are those who wind up in the top ten, or feel that they deserve to be and are deeply hurt when they aren't.

My own rankings have certainly slipped since I first started publishing - and I feel that I am improving, not getting worse. I have exactly the size circulation that I want; my subbers pay on time without prodding, they write complimentary letters, commenting on various parts of the zeen a lot more than they used to; I get more submissions every month; hell, things seem to be going great at this end. But obviously all of this has little or nothing to do with my rating. So, there's no way I can take it seriously. If the poll reflected reality to some extent, it might be interesting to keep around, but let's face it - it doesn't.

Based on the above, my ranking is completely unimportant to me. This past year I didn't vote in the Runestone Poll, nor did I plug it - I did not feel it was important enough. I have no idea how which of my subbers voted, though I'd naturally be interested in finding out what they think of the zeen. (I accomplish this through questionnaires mailed out every so often.) It's quite possible that a number of my players/subbers had no idea the Poll was going on at all, and their votes could certainly have affected my rating...but it wasn't worth informing them.

I see no reason why the votes shouldn't be made public. Comments?

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My "rewards" in publishing come from my readers and inside myself, and I have always felt satisfied with myself and appreciated by others, so I have no beef. I don't need a top score in a poll to tell me I put out a good or a bad zeen. As editor/publisher, I know better than anyone else what kind of a zeen I put out.

Another problem with the Runestone Poll is that it tells you nothing. The score just measures "good" and "bad." Larry Peery's monstrous Peeripoll affair was a step in the right direction, if feedback to publishers is what's important. However, the voting sample here is even more insignificant than that of the Runestone Poll. Of all the current polls, this one (Peeripoll) appears to be the most useful and meaningful, or at least the least useless and meaningless.

The huge number of polls diminishes the attention given to, and thus the validity of, each individual poll. I myself have grown bored by this constant polling of the most insignificant things, and have simply stopped voting. If someone is interested in how I feel he should ask me personally. If he's interested in what his subbers want, he should ask his subbers, or those whose opinions he values. Hobbywide anything-polls are senseless and pointless.

If a perfectly-run Runestone Poll, with fantastic levels of participation, were to exist, it would show one thing and one thing only: the blandest, most commonly popular zeen would be number 1. It would be a zeen devoid of personality, a thoroughly average rag that appealed to everyone at least a little. More distinctive, personal zeens with a little spark, would have people more split on how to rate it - peoples tastes differ, as you may know. If we're looking for the middle-of-the-road zeen, okay, that's fine, let's find ourselves the Asia or REO Speedwagon of Diplomacy. But if we want to find the best for each individual voter...well, those zeens are in the middle of the list.

((Well, this is in distinct opposition to how Ronald Brown thinks things are. I would have to agree more with your position than his. I would also have to agree with Robert Sacks to some extent - popularity polls like the Runestone Poll are at best worthless.

((You seem to give a grudging "OK" to something like the Peeripoll yet, and I've only heard good things about it to date. Maybe that's the way to go? Then again, did it really tell you anything you didn't already know? I thought it was pretty good, myself, even with the limited sample.

((I must agree that if you want to know what your subbers think, you should ask them directly. If somebody is not willing to sit down for one hour a year and fill out a questionnaire for me, why should I do anything for him? Is that really asking too much of his precious "limited hobby time?" I never thought so, and probably never will. If, on the other hand, you want to come up with something utterly pointless like Peery's "Power" Poll, that's another story. Well, Larry, you win one, you lose one.

((But if you ended up getting two personal polls every month, wouldn't you get tired of them and stop voting as well?))

((The following was extracted from THE BUZZARD'S BREATH #65A, a largely Third Reich oriented zeen.))

(Mark Matuschak/THE BUZZARD'S BREATH) A few issues back in EUROPA EXPRESS, a Dippy zeen, I commented on my feelings as to how silly all the constant so-called "polling" that takes place in Dippy really and truly is. Looking back at the last couple of issues of zeens that I get, I found no less than 13 polls most for the same thing - zeens and GMS. Gary Coughlan, publisher of EE, wrote back that I mentioned one poll in TBB once, so see, polls are really good stuff after all (he neglected to mention that the principal reason it was mentioned was to illustrate its idiocy). Well, the results are in on the latest poll, the 1983 "North American Poll" no less (that's so we don't have to say "Canada" - there aren't many Mexican zeens represented, and "North American" sounds sooo much more impressive). But I digress.

TBB, that slouch of zeens as it were, netted a total of three votes resulting in a

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rating of 4.66, to be exact. That means three people each gave TBB a total of 14 votes (actually, TBB should be 4.67), enough to put TBB in 43rd place out of 44 zeens if 7 more people had also voted 4.66 for TBB. Averaging a remarkable 19 votes per zeen, this poll is the definitive Dippy poll amongst the several thousand PBmers. Oh yes, yours truly drew a 2.00 on the GM poll with one person voting. Don't laugh, one poor sucker managed to get a 0.00 with one person voting (I like the precision of the results - to two decimal places no less; but those three zeros look mighty awesome...). This poll managed an even more remarkable 6 votes per GM.

So we got trashed, men. Those Dippers did it to your favorite zeen and GM and mine. Of course, not only do the so-called voters not play games (over a thousand zeen votes were recorded - a person voting for more than one zeen counting as one vote for each of his votes, but barely a hundred GM votes), they don't even know how to play them. In one roving commentary zeen, the writer still hadn't figured out the mechanics of the Russo-Soviet pact. Try rule 43.5, John.

I have voted in one poll in my life, and that was one too many. There is only one poll that interests me - the TBB subber survey. No Dip zeen I've ever seen has so consistently asked its own subscribers and players to rate it. But as all Dippers know, it's much more fun to be the judge of the defendant, especially when you can "sabotage" some of your "enemies" with a key zero here and there. Case in point: five people voted that Don Del Grande, TBB subber/trader and publisher of LIFE OF MONTY as the worst GM. Trouble is, Don hasn't run any games this year. Oh yeah, I almost forgot - this GM poll that had a two page spread in EE was the result of 78 votes. Total. I mean like 78 people voted. Yawn.

((You sound a lot like Konrad here - you run your own polling because you can tailor it to fit your needs. I don't know how often you poll your subbers in TBB, or what percent respond. Any figures on that? Do you print the results, or are they for your use only? There are a few zeens that run annual polls - GIVE ME A WEAPON! and RETAL are two that spring to mind, but not many.

((It's easy to see why TBB finished so low. Most Dippers would rather see an article on "How to Win as Turkey in 1903" than games of Third Reich, En Garde or Source of the Nile. You don't cater to Diplomacy, and the poll result shows it. I can't say about your Dip GMing, but if you can run a dozen games of Third Reich by mail with no problem you must be doing something right!

((Folks vote for more zeens than GMs for a couple of reasons. I think the main one is that if a person plays in three games, he doesn't feel "qualified" to vote on any of his GMs. However, he's also probably getting five zeens, and does feel qualified to vote on them. Also, it's not as "personal" to vote on a zeen as a GM, and some folks are deathly afraid of "offending" anybody. A third point is that just about everybody has more zeens than GMs - I play in about 10 games and get about 30 zeens, myself. Some people it's less, some it's more. But I bet that among the voters, there is an even higher zeen/GM ratio than mine.

((Is that really the "Russo-Soviet pact"?! If so, I wish I'd thought of it first!

((Would you vote in someone else's subber survey if you were to get one? Or are you really interested in the TBB subber survey exclusively? Or is it just the type of survey?

((There has been a great deal of confusion on just what the deadlines for the Rune-stone poll are. Is it just for 1983, or does it go all the way back to June 1982? There were several zeens in the top ten that folded in 1982 (JAF & DBM (I think)), for that matter. This should be cleared up if the poll is to make any sense, in even its limited way.))

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the wrapup on...POLLS

((Well, kids, that's all I have on that little topic. Let me sum up what I think we've got here.

((By and large, there is an adamant indifference towards most polls. Why? Mostly because of feared "grudge votes" and unpredictable voting patterns. Despite this indifference, a few say they would "change something" if they dropped drastically in the Runestone Poll - easily the dominant poll. However, it was not judged to be the be-all and end-all poll, with opinions split about 50/50 on whether it was worth anything at all. Overall, the highly detailed Peeripoll was viewed in a more favorable light. The Marco Poll was hardly mentioned at all, and then only as a counter to those nasty grudge votes.

((Quite a few complained that there aren't enough voters in any poll to make it "significant." Statistically, perhaps, that is true. But if you instead focus on the "hard core" dippers, I think the statistical significance rises sharply. Only the poll taker really knows for sure just who is voting and who isn't. It could be interesting to know who voted in the poll to find out what percent of the voters were from that core.

((The best polls were the various "house" polls, at least in the opinion of those who were interested enough to run them. The general feeling there being that the pubber will ask his subbers specific questions and get specific answers. He can use these to help him put out a better zeen by concentrating on various weaknesses and strengths.

((All in all, I'd have to say this was a very interesting discussion. Is there anything else anyone would like to add? The floor is still open.))

PUBLISHER'S HANDBOOK

((Typically, Mark Luedi is the one to write about this. I do have a few comments though, so I will run them this once.))

(Rod Walker) As I recall, Mark called me on that a couple of weeks ago, and I offered to make him a copy of the original one. I believe he told me that he finally obtained one. If I am wrong, and Mark needs a copy of the 1976 IDA Publisher's Handbook, I will be happy to xerox my copy and send it on. Just for the record...in case we miscommunicated.

((Talked to Mark on the phone the other day, and he says he does indeed have a copy of the old book.))

(Robert Sacks) Publisher's Handbook - I vaguely remember seeing one; it wasn't helpful: too much official propaganda. (I even think I wrote for it.) I suppose I should help with the critique, perhaps even write a response to parts.

((Perhaps even write something new, exciting and original?))

NEW BUSINESS

There were quite a few possible choices here, but after much thought I decided just to plunge right in, go for the gusto, or what have you. Thanks to Jim Meinel for writing in with a few questions on future topics - hope you don't mind if we take them one at a time, Jim.

ETHICS

Practically from the beginning of Dipdom, this has been a matter of concern. After all, if you never meet any of the other players or GMs you have to take their word for certain things. Did so-and-so submit his orders properly? Does Person X really exist? Can you toss somebody you don't like out of your games/zeens?

Dipdom has had its fair share of selfish SOBs who will do anything to get ahead. Bernie Oaklyn/Buddy Tretick was famed for game fixing, as were several other GMs from days gone by. We've had our fair share of dishonest players and plagiarists. In a

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new business...ETHICS

hobby where the main pasttime is lying, can it be otherwise?

But if there is a line between "ethical" and "unethical," where do you draw it? Are fake zeens ethical? Some say no, but most say yes. Is NMR insurance (calling an NMRing player collect for orders) ethical? Many say yes, some say no. Is impersonating another player to your GM ethical? Most say no, but others say, "If you can get away with it...."

There are ways for GMs to be subtly biased. If, for instance, every time a certain player NMRs, everybody that's NMR gets a phone call. Other months it's just tough luck. Or favoritism towards a particular game. It's possible for a publisher to tilt the scales in a game by printing enough good or bad about one (or more) of the players in his zeen.

Outside of the games, we have the area of "not for print" material and editorial responsibility. Even if a submission is labeled "for print" do you have to print it? Is it ethical to print unsubstantiated "facts" even if you apologize later? I want to know just what is, and is not, okay. You can answer this as a GM, publisher, or (preferably) both if possible.

Have at it, guys. This is a much more wide open topic than polls, so I'll leave you plenty of room to roam around in.

(Jim Meinel) I don't want to be a muckraker or anything but I have difficulty believing that some prominent GMs are so lily-white with their adjudications. I don't want any confessions, but how many of you have done something which you think is probably either not right, unfair, biased, etc. but would never admit to it? I'll be first; yes, I have, but I'll never tell. I try to be perfect, but there are times when as a GM I am either too tired, married or apathetic that my standards lapse. Am I another Bernie Oaklyn? I'm not talking about doing it all the time; just once will be enough to lose your virginal status.

((Yes, I know what you mean. Sure, you could say that I have been "unethical" in the past - I'm guilty. My particular fault seems to lie with the telephone. Sometimes I'd call everybody if one of my favorite players (and sure, I think each GM has a "favorite" player or two - for any number of reasons, and not that that player will necessarily gain any advantage for it) was NMRed. On the other hand, if a player was consistently NMR, I'd stop calling him. Also, I had a tendency to talk too much about the game at hand. I'd find myself answering tactical questions that I probably should have just kept quiet about. Then again, I've experienced both of those situations from a player's point of view as well, so I know I'm not alone! Bernie Oaklyn? No, I don't think so. Unless you go so far as to actually give away orders in advance or seriously screw up a player ("lose" his orders, for instance, or falsify them), I doubt you'll be set in front of any firing squads.

((Then again, what do I know. Well, what about the rest of you judges out there - are you all lily-white and perfect (or try to be so hard that you can't admit to any failings), or do you have skeletons rattling in some of your closets as well?

((And I'm not really so interested as a catalog of what is ethical as why it may or may not be okay. OK? Go for it!))

((I have a little more space at the bottom of this page that I need to fill up. This whole issue has run longer than I had expected it would. Well, then's the breaks, and I'll just let it go on until it finishes. If that means I put out a 100 page issue next time, you can bet there will be no issue #4!! But I'm unconcerned at this point. If you have anything at all to say about what's going on in here, I'll try my best to fit it in. And maybe we'll even run a special issue on bottom-of-the-page filler some day, huh? I'm sure we could just about all use some from time to time!))

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Sept. 1, 1983

"GOING STEADY"

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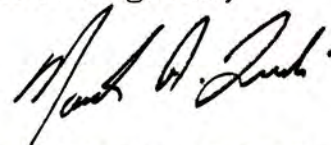
This would be Goon Squad #2, but the name has been changed. This is a monthly flyer (now a subzine of House of Lords) devoted to the topic of a new publisher's handbook. Not a whole lot has happened in the past month, as I've been pretty busy. However, a list of the things that did happen follows:

- 1) Dick Martin has offered to run this in his House of Lords, for which I'm appreciative and have accepted. I think that HOL may be very helpful in the gathering of material for the handbook. It may also make a very suitable replacement for the handbook, but I somehow feel, that it will be a good source of materials for a handbook. In light of that, publication might be postponed for a few months. Any thoughts?
- 2) Fred Davis sent me copies made from his copy of the Publisher's Handbook. Thanks, Fred. I've not had the time to peruse it in depth, most I merely skimmed. However, although much of the material would be nice to use, it would need to be updated. This would involve contacting Len Lakofka, the editor/publisher of the original IDA Publisher's Handbook. Of the authors listed, only Rod Walker, Lewis Pulsipher, Doug Beyerlein, and Robert Sacks are still active in the hobby.
- 3) Some people have come forward, stating that they are willing to help with the handbook. I have received much feedback from a number of individuals. Only one person said there is no need for a publisher's handbook; one other suggested that a handbook would not have made a difference in his case. The people who have commented (either verbally or via the mails) include John Caruso, Bruce Linsey, Steve Langley, Ron (Can) Brown, Mark Berch, John Michalski, and Kevin Tighe.
- 4) Mike Barno contributed \$4.00, which more than covered the costs of printing GS #1 (Most of the ones mailed were with other notes/orders/zines), and should help with future postage needs. Thanks, Mike. would
- 5) If there is anyone reading this who, like a copy of GS #1, drop me a card. I still have more available.

%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%

I guess that's it. As with GS #1, this is being typed in less than ideal conditions, so excuse the errors and vagueness. I will be contacting/responding to people personally as much as possible.

best regards,



((I don't really know if HOL can actually supplant a Publisher's Handbook, or if it would be better off as a supplement instead. I don't really plan to publish this forever, and it doesn't really cover a broad base of issues...yet. Why not just use this as a vehicle for the promotion of the concept of a PH, and the ironing out of the details? I was thinking of a sort of novice packet for publishers, with maybe two or three contrasting articles on each of, say, ten topics. I'd also like to build it from scratch, with maybe a few old articles for contrast. Well, any comments on this should go to Mark, folks. I was thinking that you may want to run a discussion of your own, Mark. All this typing tires out my fingers!))

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~~August 28, 1983~~

Dear Dick,

September 1, 1983

Well, here it is, a couple days later than I intended. Felt horrible today! Still do, as a matter of fact; think I slept for 3 or 4 hours this afternoon.

I really think your House of Lords is a great idea. It might even supplant the need for a publisher's handbook, or a lengthy one. I think you should extend subscriptions to former and prospective publishers, rather than just present ones. (In fact, can you mail copies to Mike Barno and Kevin Tighe? Since you're doing the census, I won't need to give you the addresses.) Give the as-yet-unborn zine publishers a chance to think about some of the things they're going to encounter before they start publishing. Maybe this will get them to think about some of these things. And the experience of retired publishers (e.g. Michalski) should not be excluded either. I imagine a lot of the newer types (myself included) will have a lot of what might be considered stupid questions. That could make for another section of HobL. People send in "stupid questions", you print them, soliciting answers, or refer the question to the publisher(s) you think would best answer that question. The questions could be anonymously printed, for that matter, to keep the embarrassment of the green publisher to a minimum. But, it should somehow be emphasized that there is no such thing as a "Stupid Question".

Also, I might suggest that instead of one topic for new business, you go with two or three. I have nothing to say, either for or against Polls. With more topics (I think three would probably be the max.), you might generate more response from various publishers. I'm sure you'll get plenty of suggestions for future business. In fact, I'd like to suggest that you bring up the publisher's handbook within the next two or three months. Maybe we can get a lot of publishers to comment on a great deal about a handbook.

Maybe I can comment on polls a bit. I think that polls are a reflection of themselves. With only seventy-some people voting in this year's Runestone Poll, it doesn't show a great participation by the hobby-at-large member. I'm sure that a good 50-75% of the people voting were publishers/long-time active members. In that regard, it wasn't very successful. Other polls have even less participation. Perhaps more emphasis should be put on participating in the polls, and less on the actual results. I was a bit surprised to see TMoBR only show up in 29th. But then, looking at the zines above me, I could see that it was more-or-less in its proper place. What was encouraging for me was that 25 people voted for it. Really though, I don't put that much on the line as far as polls go. If you do, you're going to be in for a big disappointment someday, most likely.

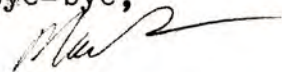
Also, I really don't care for the idea of a "Hobby Pollster" whatever that is.

Well, good luck with this little "zeen" of yours. Hope it is well received, because it is certainly an idea whose time had arrived.

Also, let me know if there are people out there not getting HobL, so that I can mail them a copy of GS, kayo? (I still haven't figured out the new name! Care to do the honors? Nah, I wouldn't want to put you through that.) Gosh, if I'd written GS this freely, it'd be respectable. Just like publishing-sometimes you got it, sometimes ya don't.

Better run along. The \$1.00 is for the Retaliation anniversary issue.

bye-bye,



HOL #2 September 1983

reply to...LAST MINUTE LUEDI

((Out of the laziness in my heart, I think I'll pass on retyping this, Mark. I hope you understand. Former and prospective pubbers are welcome here, but they'll have to request a sub. I can't just be mailing this out to everybody, y'know.

((I don't know about you, but one "new business" seemed to be plenty enough for this time. In the future we may try two topics, but they'll usually be closely related. If we can't get enough to fill 10 pages with one topic, we probably won't be getting much of a response (based on this month's example). I'll see if I can send you a list of who did get HOL #1, and you can send copies to anybody else, how's that?

((Anyway, thanks for writing, Mark. Thanks to the rest of y'all as well, this thing seems to have some promise. Feel free to write in! One last note before I wrap this all up: I'll try to publish this on or about the 7th of each month. If you can get anything in to me by the 1st, I can be sure to fit it in. If not, well...I make no guarantees. OK? OK! See you next month!))

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